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about

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a·bout [ə bōwt] **CORE MEANING:** a grammatical word that refers to different sides or aspects of something from some point of orientation • (prep) *a book about a dog* • (adv) *There's a lot of laziness about.*

1. preposition

in connection with: in connection with or relating to • *think about problems*

2. preposition

approximately: close to in number, time, or degree • *inviting about 15 people*

3. preposition

doing or attending to: with or in an activity

• *go about your business*

4. preposition

close by: placed, located, or happening close by or around • *frantic activity going on all about us*

5. preposition

around: around or on a place or person • *a red scarf about her neck*

6. adverb preposition

in various places: positioned here and there

• *scattered about the house*

• scattered about the house

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7. adverb preposition

in different directions: from place to place in different directions or in no particular direction • *children running about everywhere*

8. adverb

in circulation: available or in circulation

• *there was never much money about*

9. adverb

into a reversed position: in or to the opposite direction • *the wrong way about*

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10. adverb

all around: on every side of or all the way around "He proceeded to the banks of the Hudson, and looked about among the vessels." Jules Verne *Around the World in 80 Days* (1873)

11. adverb

used as intensifier: used to emphasize a statement, usually when expressing impatience or anger (*informal*) • *Well, it's about time you showed up!*

12. adverb

NAUTICAL to opposite tack: on or to the opposite tack

[Old English *onbūtan* "on or around the outside of," from *on* (see [on](#)) + *būtan* (see [but](#))]

be about to be on the point of doing something • *The game was about to start.*

be what something or somebody is (all)
about to be what something or somebody involves or has as a purpose (*informal*)

not about to used to emphasize that somebody is certainly not going to do something (*informal*) • *I'm not about to apologize!*

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adj : being the most complete
in its class

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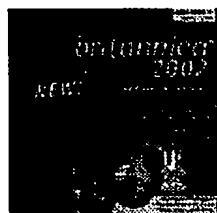
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about[1,adverb]
about[2,preposition]
about[3,adjective]

Main Entry: **1 about** ⓘ

Pronunciation: &-'baut

Function: *adverb*

Etymology: Middle English, from Old English *abutan*, from *1a-* + *butan* outside -- more at [BUT](#)

Date: before 12th century

1 a : reasonably close to <*about* a year ago> b : **ALMOST** <*about* starved> c : on the verge of -- usually used with *be* and a following infinitive <*is about* to join the army> -- used with a negative to express intention or determination <*not about* to quit>

2 : on all sides : **AROUND**

3 a : in rotation b : around the outside

4 : **HERE AND THERE**

5 : in the vicinity : **NEAR**

6 : in succession : **ALTERNATELY** <*turn about* is fair play>

7 : in the opposite direction <*face about*> <*the other way about*>

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\&\ as a and u in about	\e\ as e in bet	\o\ as aw in law
\&\ as e in kitten	\E\ as ea in easy	\oi\ as oy in boy
\&r\ as ur/er in further	\g\ as g in go	\th\ as th in thin
\a\ as a in ash	\i\ as i in hit	\[th]\ as th in the
\A\ as a in ace	\I\ as i in ice	\u\ as oo in loot
\o\ as o in mop	\j\ as j in job	\u\ as oo in foot
\au\ as ou in out	\[ng]\ as ng in sing	\y\ as y in yet
\ch\ as ch in chin	\O\ as o in go	\zh\ as sh in vision

For more information see the Guide To Pronunciation.

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